

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, August 17, 2005 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: Paul Bobrowski, Chair; Mary Scipioni, Chris Boyd, Carl Mailler, Rod Francis, Aaron Hayden, Adrian Fabos

ABSENT: David Kastor

STAFF: Niels la Cour, Senior Planner; Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Mr. Bobrowski opened the meeting at 7:02 PM.

I. MINUTES – Meeting of July 20, 2005

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to approve the Minutes of July 20, 2005 as submitted. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0-2 (Francis and Mailler abstained).

Since it was not yet time for the scheduled public hearing, the Chair moved ahead on the agenda.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Development Authorization Date for ANR 2006-00003 – 550 Leverett Road, Barry Roberts** – Mr. la Cour explained that this detail had not been voted at the last meeting.

Mr. Mailler MOVED: to establish September 2005 as the date that this new lot will be eligible for a building permit. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

- C. Planning Commissioners Journal** – in packet

II. PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL PERMIT PLANNING BOARD

SPP 2006-00001, 611 North East Street – Dorothy & Stanley Gawle

Mr. Bobrowski opened the public hearing for this request for a Special Permit for a waiver from Section 7.715 – Access Requirements & Driveways, to allow the grade of a driveway to exceed 10%. (Map 9C/Parcel 41, Low Density Residence (R-LD) Zoning Districts with a Farmland Conservation (FC) Overlay District).

Appearing before the Board were applicant Mr. Stanley Gawle and Mr. Peter Wells of the Berkshire Design Group. Mr. Wells told the Board that different driveway plans had been developed and the proposal under consideration tonight seems best. Mr. Wells commented that the property has one of the best view sheds in Town. They have received Conservation Commission approval, he noted.

Mr. Bobrowski noted for the Board that according to the Zoning Bylaw, the driveway's grade was the issue which it would review under the Special Permit process.

Ms. Scipioni expressed concerns about the view sheds for others in Town being spoiled by the proposed house. She said that she would recommend lowering the elevations.

The Board, Mr. Wells and Mr. Gawle discussed the slope, grading, elevations and vegetation issues. Mr. Gawle assured the Board that he intends to keep and/or replace as many trees as necessary to provide screening. Further, he said that out of approximately 270 acres which is maintained in APR, he has only taken out one lot to build a house on, which has always been his intent. The house will only be one story and he has tried to be sensitive to the site, he told the Board.

In response to the discussion of view shed protection, Mr. Hayden said that this situation clearly demonstrates the need for a master plan for the Town.

Mr. la Cour suggested that in response to the Town Engineer's recommendation that an emergency vehicle turnaround be included, that they use the spot at the first switch-back where there is already an existing gravel road. Mr. Wells said that they had already planned to do that to provide a parking space for the Gawles in the winter time if they can't get up the rest of the driveway.

There was no additional public comment.

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Following discussion, the Board voted 6-0-1 (Scipioni abstained) to approve this Special Permit pursuant to Section 7.715 to allow a driveway to exceed 10% in grade. The decision is subject to the following waiver and conditions:

Waiver:

Waive section 7.71 to allow the grade of the driveway to exceed 10%.

Conditions:

- 1) Appropriate shade trees shall be planted to buffer the house visually.
- 2) The proposed emergency vehicle turn-around at the first switch-back shall be shown on the final plans.
- 3) All landscaping shall be installed and continuously maintained.
- 4) Four (4) sets of the final approved plans shall be submitted to the Planning Department.
- 5) This permit shall expire in two (2) years if substantial construction is not begun.

III. APPEARANCE

ZBA 2006-00007 – Main Street Housing Development - Amherst Housing Authority

Request for a Special Permit to construct 11 apartments/townhouses on Main Street (adjacent to Watson Farms) under Section 3.322 & 3.323 of the Zoning Bylaw and for modifications to setback requirements. (Map 14B/Parcel 223; R-VC Zone)

Appearing on behalf of the Amherst Housing Authority (AHA) were Ms. Donna Crabtree and Mr. Peter Jessop and architects Mr. Peter Wells of the Berkshire Design Group, and Mr. Mark Sternick of Dietz & Company, Architects.

Mr. Wells presented the proposal to the Board and said that one issue was just discovered this morning which meant that they would not need a waiver of the setback requirement. Instead they are proposing to move the building and they expect that the Conservation Commission will approve it. Mr. Sternick described the buildings and said that the Historical Commission was in favor of the proposal.

Mr. Hayden commented that the proposal was a good example of appropriate infill development which should be encouraged in Town. In response to a question from Mr. Mailler, Ms. Crabtree said that a playground is not proposed because the development is located next to Fort River School which has play facilities. Mr. Francis asked how snow removal would be handled. Mr. Fabos said that he would encourage the applicant to plant shade trees along Main Street.

Ms. Hwei-Ling Greeney, 76 McClellan Street, asked about the proposed number of parking spaces, and thought there might be too many. She suggested using trees and shrubs to shield noise from Main Street and she also suggested that a sidewalk connect buildings 1 and 2.

Mr. Mark Kosarick, Shumway Street, asked who would own the project once its completed. Ms. Crabtree said that solely for financing reasons the Housing Authority will sell it to an Amherst-based non-profit organization but expects that management will revert back to the AHA.

Mr. Kosarick also asked about dumpster location and the number of units proposed.

Mr. la Cour suggested that the applicant save and/or replace as many shade trees as possible. He also said that plantings, rather than fencing, should be used to discourage people from going into the wetlands.

Ms. Naka Ishii, 26 Shumway Street, said that she likes the appearance of the buildings but expressed concern about encroaching on the wetlands.

Mr. Sternick said that they were looking for a letter of support from the Board.

Ms. Greeney asked if the Planning Board would encourage green building design. Mr. Sternick said that it would be done to the greatest extent possible but would depend on the budget.

After questions and discussion, there emerged a consensus of support for the project.

IV. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

B. Planning Board Representative to Design Review Board – Appointment –
Postponed to September 7, 2005

D. The Hadley Commoner – in packet

E. Other – September meeting schedule – September 7 and 21

V. OLD BUSINESS – None

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR 2006-00004, 119 Blue Hills Road, Peter W. MacConnell

ANR 2006-00005, East Pleasant Street, Timothy Bancroft, Trustee, Marion Page Bancroft
Trust

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA2006-00002, 150 Fearing Street, Nick Sakellis

ZBA2006-00003, 47 Summer Street, Nina Shandler

ZBA2006-00004, 125 East Hadley Road, Yvonne P. Morand

ZBA2006-00005, 50 Station Road, Gail Keith

ZBA2006-00006, 321 Main Street, Sirinam S. Khalsa

ZBA2006-00007, Main Street, Amherst Housing Authority – reviewed earlier tonight

ZBA2006-00008, 750 North Pleasant Street, Donald & Karen Gallagher

ZBA2006-00009, 740 Belchertown Road, Town of Amherst

VIII. UPCOMING SPC/SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS – None

IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Zoning – Mr. Bobrowski said that the Subcommittee discussed zoning amendments for Town Meeting. They hope to have something dealing with slope issues for the spring. Also discussed were the Planning Board's Rules & Regulations.

B. Atkins Working Group – Mr. la Cour said that DPW has taken over the project. We're hoping to have more regular meetings in the future, he said.

X. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission – No Report

B. Community Preservation Act Committee – The Board needs to appoint a new representative.

C. Farm Committee – No Report

D. Comprehensive Planning Committee – Mr. Hayden said that the Committee reviewed past efforts for the Select Board. The next Community Forum is scheduled for September 29th. Ms. Scipioni said that the Committee will present the RFP to Town Meeting and will ask for funds to continue the process.

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XI. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – Mr. Bobrowski asked the Board if they wanted to schedule a send off for Ms. Rooney who recently completed her time on the Board. It will be put on the next agenda.

He also offered to draft the findings for the Special Permit which the Board approved earlier.

XII. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – No Report

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boyd MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 9:10 PM. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Approved:

Paul G. Bobrowski, Chair

DATE: _____